

Write On!



*A compilation
of prize winning entries in the
Alberta Womens' Institutes
Creative Writing Competition
2005*

WINNERS ALL!

Each year, Alberta Womens' Institutes sponsors a Creative Writing Competition open to the more than 1000 members in the organization.

The contest consists of seven categories: Play, Poetry, Children's Fiction, Adult Fiction, Memoir, Travel, and Essay. Any member may enter once in each category.

Entries are judged by professional writers and awards are given out at the annual AWI Convention.

Awards may be given for First, Second and Third place but, if the judges determine there is none deserving first place, they may award a lower placing or none at all in that category.

Each year, as members cheer the winners, many wish they could read the entries, so the Executive have asked all members who enter the contest to agree in writing that their story, play or poem may be used for AWI fundraising. As a result, this booklet is made possible.

We hope you will enjoy the many and varied writings it contains. It may give you some ideas as to what is judged to be a 'winner'. Maybe it will inspire you to give it a try yourself and enter a future competition.

Our AWI is a talented group of women, this booklet highlights just one aspect of their many accomplishments.

READ ON!

INDEX

TRAVEL

Stonehenge on the Saskatchewan...	<i>Henia J. Martyniuk</i>	1
Branson by Bus...	<i>Helen Coonan</i>	3

MEMOIR (NONFICTION)

A Tree I have Known...	<i>Henia J. Martyniuk</i>	13
Are You Lonesome Tonight?...	<i>Diane Dammann</i>	15
Coping With Circumstances...	<i>Kathryn Habberfield</i>	16

POETRY

Search For Strength...	<i>Henia J. Martyniuk</i>	18
Faith...	<i>Mary Maggs</i>	19
Polar Bears...	<i>Edna Whittleton</i>	20

ESSAY

Finding Your History...	<i>Isabelle Nash</i>	21
And The Winner is...Father!...	<i>Henia J. Martyniuk</i>	27
Show-Offs...	<i>Elizabeth Lesfrud</i>	29

ADULT FICTION:

A Father's Day Shirt Tale...	<i>Henia J. Martyniuk</i>	33
Rena's Log Cabin Home...	<i>Marion Brooks</i>	35

CHILD FICTION

A Day For Tears...	<i>Marion Brooks</i>	37
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FIRST PLACE: TRAVEL
OVERALL WINNER OF THE COMPETITION

Stonehenge on the Saskatchewan

by Henia J. Martyniuk
Warspite, W.I.

2:30 p.m., Saturday, April 29. At Stonehenge, above old Warspite Ferry Crossing on North Victoria Trail, the North Saskatchewan River changes character, right before the eyes of one human and a dozen ducks.

Three miles downstream, the river, still in winter white, looks, for all the world, like its grimy, flimsy coat has seen better days. Here and there, a rent shows ever-increasing inky blue water stains. The valley is filled with sunlit brilliance reminiscent of February, strangely out of place against late April brown.

The river is nervous. Warm sun beats down, corroding the ice from the top; the current eats away at it from below. In the stillness, there is an air of mystery as though the river knows the secret of the ice is about to be exposed and no power can stop it.

A mile upstream, the river has already changed to blue, silky dark blue, flocked with tiny specks of white that sail the open water on a collision course to oblivion among bigger white patches. Two pencil lines of white rotting ice border the blue ribbon to the horizon to hold the water from tearing at roots of spruce, aspen and willow on the bank.

Down the centre, on the spot before Stonehenge, the blue is, first, a narrow alley of moving water. Minute by minute it widens, lopping off large ice pans with a sound of slamming kitchen doors, startling, but not grinding. Gradually, blue overtakes white; the ambiance in the valley changes, from glaring to muted, from silent to gentle swishing. The current is strong, purposeful, awe-inspiring. You can't help but wonder how far a single cup of water flows. To Prince Albert? Lake Winnipeg? Hudson Bay?

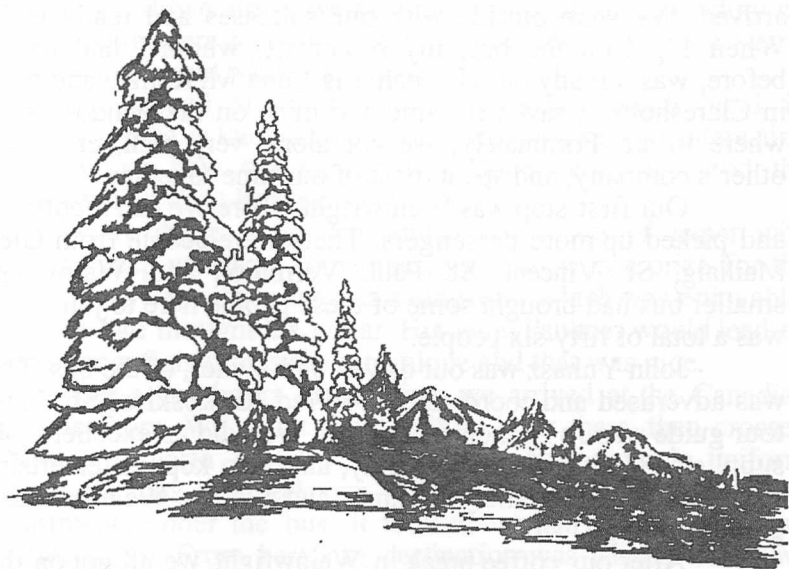
The two arms of the Saskatchewan River, North and South, make up one of Canada's largest river systems, draining almost all of the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and a portion of Manitoba. They meander the prairie separately to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, then merge into one, the Saskatchewan, to empty into Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay beyond.

Kisiskatchewan, the Indians called the North Saskatchewan early on in Canada's history, meaning swift current. While it is born as a mountain stream, it is a prairie river, dark and murky with silt drawn from its many tributaries on the plains. It is a swift river, swift like the prairie winds; peaceful, like the peaceful prairie, not gnashing like the Fraser, or expansive like the Mackenzie.

The North Saskatchewan whispers history. From time immemorial, it has wandered like the earliest wanderers of the prairies. Almost five hundred years ago came Europeans. It was a busy river then, testing the strength, skill and will of explorers who wanted to know it, and fur traders whose life centered on it. Then came police and farmers to tame the prairie and control it.

Stonehenge? Someone, modern druids perhaps, have placed huge boulders on the shoulder of the North Victoria Trail where the Warspite ferry linked north to south. They are an imposing monument to the river.

A short distance away, a lonely Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer on his mount watches over it, put there as a testament to the 'men in red coats' who once passed by to leave their mark on Canada's western history. ■



SECOND PLACE: TRAVEL**Branson by Bus**
(October 22nd to November 7th, 2004)

by Helen Coonan
Wandering River, W.I.

On October 22, about noon, my son, Jack, drove me to the farm of my friend, Bob Haley. Shortly after, I got into Bob's van and we were on our way to Edmonton. About four o'clock, we arrived at the Haley's home. When we got out of the van, we stepped on ice and the whole area was like a skating rink. However, we managed to get across and into the apartment where Anne, Bob's wife, was waiting for us. Anne made a delicious supper. I spent the night with them. The next morning we were up at 6:00 a.m. and had breakfast. Then we left for Wetaskiwin and went to Bob's brother's place. Lloyd drove us to the hotel where we would board the bus, and he would take the Haley's van to his place until we returned.

We waited at the hotel for about half an hour and the bus arrived. We were outside with our suitcases and ready to board. When I got on the bus, my roommate, whom I had never met before, was already on. Her name is Edna McKenzie and she lives in Claresholm. I saw her name and mine on the window, so knew where to sit. Fortunately, we got along very well, enjoyed each other's company, and spent most of our time together.

Our first stop was Wainwright where we had a coffee break and picked up more passengers. There were people from Glendon, Maillaig, St. Vincent, St. Paul, Vermilion and Wainwright. A smaller bus had brought some of these people here to join us. There was a total of fifty-six people.

John Yuhasz was our driver, and owner, of the bus. This trip was advertised and coordinated by Fred Krekoski of St. Paul. Our tour guide was Jo Nichols of Ponoka, who did an excellent job. She supplied us with water and candy, and also kept us entertained as we traveled, with a variety of games and quizzes. We even had a few games of bingo.

After our coffee break in Wainwright, we all got on the bus, which would be full now. Our destination for lunch was North Battleford. We spent an enjoyable hour there and were on our way again. Our afternoon coffee break was at an A&W out in a farmer's field near Davidson. Soon, we were back on the road

heading for Regina, where we would spend the night at the West Harvest Inn. Upon arriving there, we were given our room keys. In a short time, our baggage was delivered to our rooms. After a smorg for supper, some people went to an Art Show at the Inn. The work was beautiful and reasonably priced. Others wanted to go to the Casino and John obliged, but he would stay only two hours. Anyone wanting to stay longer would need to find their own rides back. The rooms at this hotel were nice and the staff friendly.

Sunday morning, October 24, we were up and ready for a new day. Before going for breakfast, we put our baggage outside of our doors. It would be loaded back on the bus. By 8:00 a.m. everybody was ready and willing to climb aboard. We traveled through the Regina Plains, which sometimes is under water. It was dull and overcast this morning, but inside the bus, everyone seemed to be in a sunny, happy mood.

As we drove through Weyburn, we spotted four beautiful tall stocks of wheat along the highway, a monument tribute to the Saskatchewan prairies. Weyburn is the town where Tommy Douglas (past premier of Saskatchewan) started his illustrious career and implemented our "National Health Care System", as we know it.

As we drove along, we saw thousands of geese feeding on grain which farmers had been unable to harvest. Once, we saw a huge flock of elegant white snow geese.

We stopped at Smitty's for a two-hour lunch break in Estevan. The area is known for coal mining. We saw an interesting comparison of how the mining was done years ago and the standards which must be met today.

As we drove along, Jo handed out sheets of paper with quizzes to keep us busy. Sometimes, we even won a prize for the most right answers. Then we had a singsong which was enjoyable. Doug Law had brought his guitar. His wife, Pauline, would lead us in the singing. Sometimes she sang alone and that was nice.

After a few hours of traveling, we arrived at the Canadian Duty-Free Store. We spent about half an hour there, then crossed the border at North Portal. A handsome young man in uniform came on the bus to check our ID's while another checked the compartments under the bus. It took about half an hour and we were free to go. From here, our destination was Minot, where we would spend the night at the Days Inn. We all went over to Perkins restaurant for a delicious supper. Our group of people were really great, very compatible and always on time.

Monday morning we got up and ready, put our baggage outside the door and went down for a delicious continental breakfast. At 8:00 a.m. we got on board and headed south. Just out of Minot, we went past some wind-powered generators which are used to generate power for local consumption, similar to the ones used in southern Alberta. North Dakota also has a coal-powered generator to generate power, similar to the ones near Hanna.

At 9:30 a.m., we stopped at McDonalds in Berlington for a half hour coffee break. As we drove along we saw many fields of sunola which had not been combined. Sunola is a cross between sunflowers and canola. Some is used for making cooking oil, and some for birdseed. The morning was quite dull and cloudy.

We arrived at Jamestown at 11:30 a.m., stopping for lunch at Perkins restaurant, enjoying a good lunch and good service. At 12:45, it was time to be on the road again. Everyone seemed content and ready for a catnap.

At about 2:00 p.m., we had a thirty-five minute pit stop in Fargo. The sun finally came out to greet us, but there was a cold wind. This was the first day we saw the sun since we started our trip. The grass was green here and leaves were still on the trees. It was 3:30 p.m. when Jo got us organized to play bingo. Those who wanted to join in needed to pay a loonie. This money would be used as prize money. It kept us entertained for quite a few miles. We were driving through an area where cornfields were being harvested. The corn is used to feed animals and chickens, as well as some being made into cornmeal for baking.

Once again, Doug and Pauline Law entertained us with their musical selections.

About 4:30 p.m., we arrived in Watertown where we would spend the night at the Comfort Inn. As we walked into the Inn, the aroma of freshly baked cookies filled the air. We were treated to these fresh-baked cookies and more. In the hospitality room, there were crackers, cheese and a variety of meats.

Room keys were handed out, and baggage delivered to our rooms. This was the same procedure during the whole trip. The bus was leaving for the Casino at 6:00 p.m. for those wanting to go.

Tuesday, October 26, we got up and ready, then went down to enjoy a delicious continental breakfast. The waffles and sausage were excellent. Everybody was out and on the bus by 7:45 a.m. Two hostesses came on board the bus to pass out an information package with a dark peppermint patty attached. These

were compliments of the Chamber of Commerce. What a nice gesture. We left Watertown at 7:55 a.m. The weather was cool with a bit of wind. We saw quite a few sheep and cattle farms as we traveled. Then we noticed some beehives, the first we had seen. Jo informed us that we were now traveling through the countryside where Laura Ingalls had lived. We passed Rapid City and, at 10:00 a.m., we arrived at Vermilion for our coffee break, stop and shop. Back on the bus, we were heading south towards Elk Point. It was almost 11:00 a.m. when we crossed into Iowa. As we entered Iowa, looking up, we saw a statue of an Indian with a gun on top of a hill. He guards this site.

At noon, we stopped at Buffalo Run Casino in Council Bluff for lunch. There was a nice restaurant in the Casino. We didn't really have time to try our luck at the machines unless we wanted to go hungry. In an hour we would be back on the bus. There was more foliage on the trees here, and the colours were beautiful. Shortly after 2:00 p.m., we crossed into the state of Missouri. It had been raining again.

We arrived in Kansas City about 4:30 and would be spending the night here. However, our rooms weren't ready, so some people went over to Wal-Mart and others went to the Cracker Barrel, a very nice place with restaurant and shop combined. We stayed at the Fairfield Inn. Our room was comfortable and clean.

Wednesday, October 27, the temperature this morning was 63F, foggy and drizzling. We had a light breakfast at the Cracker Barrel and boarded at 8:00 a.m. An accident ahead kept us at a standstill. It took two hours to travel twenty-seven miles. Our morning coffee break was at Peculiar, at Flying J's Truck Stop.

At noon we arrived at Precious Moments. It was sunny and hot. The grounds were beautiful with flowers blooming everywhere. Sam Butcher, the artist who designed the Precious Moments dolls was inspired to create a memorial to his son, who was killed in a car accident. There was a chapel with beautiful stained glass windows and figurines of the dolls, like little children, painted on the walls. There was also a gift shop and lunch bar. The variety of food was very limited. They had hot dogs, chili and ice cream, but no hot tea, only cold drinks.

At 2:00 p.m., we were on our way to the Fantastic Caverns. At the caverns, they were waiting for us. There were two wagons, each pulled by a quad. We got into the wagons and had a fifty-five minute ride through the caves, which had been discovered in 1867.

They had been explored by twelve women from an Athletic Club, and for many years used as an entertainment place.

When we came out of the caverns it was raining. We boarded the bus and headed for Branson, arriving there at 5:45 p.m. We went into our rooms for a few minutes, then to Shoneys and had salad bar. Back on the bus, we were ready to enjoy our first show. Tonight we were going to the Delene Show. Harley Worthit, a good comic, was also on the show. Everybody enjoyed Delene. She had great songs. After the show we were driven back to JR's Motel where we stayed for one week.

Thursday, October 28, we awoke to the sound of rain. For our continental breakfast, we had to walk across the street. Then we were on our way to the Ronnie Prophet Show. His theatre is connected to the mall. We enjoyed the show and had a lot of laughs with his friend, Bessie. She came and took a man from our group to perform with Ronnie. It was hilarious.

After the show, we had our lunch at the mall. At 2:00 p.m., we got on the bus with an extra passenger, who told us to call her Loo Loo. She was our guide for the tour of Branson. We went to the Ozarks and visited the Table Rock Dam. On one side there is the warm lake and, on the other side, it is cold. The White River was converted into a lake named Tanaycome. We also saw a fish hatchery, then we went to see the college and the lovely grounds. Unbelievably, there is no tuition fee. The students work on the grounds or in town and their wages go for their college fees. Our tour was very interesting and informative. We were driven back to JR's, said goodbye to Loo Loo, and went out for supper. We had a nice sunny day after the morning rain.

At 7:00 p.m., we left for the Dutton Show, consisting of seven children and their parents. They sing, dance and play many instruments. During their performance, some of them would come down among the audience. Again, they took a man from our group to perform on the stage. We were becoming famous now, with two stars on our bus. We were ready to call it a day.

Friday, October 29, we woke to a warm, cloudy morning, went out for our continental breakfast and were on the bus at 8:30 a.m. This morning we were going to have a group photo taken, compliments of Fred, who, later, gave us a copy. We shopped for half an hour at a Giftware Outlet Store. At 9:30 a.m., we departed for Silver Dollar City. It is a very interesting park, with lots to see and lots of entertainment. There is also a cave in this park. To fully enjoy everything, one would need to spend a day there. We stayed about three hours, then went back to our rooms and relaxed for awhile.

After supper we departed for the Presley's Jubilee Theatre for the Presleys Show. It was also a family show of music and comedy. The grandfather played a guitar. One of the children, about six years old, sang. We enjoyed the entertainment. When we were boarding the bus after the show, it was raining quite hard. Edna and I went out for coffee at Shoneys before going to bed.

Sunday, October 30, was going to be a busy day. We were up, had breakfast, and on the bus by 8:15 a.m. Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum was on our list for today, followed by the Roy Rogers Show, hosted by his son, Dusty. It had a much different style than the other shows, but just as enjoyable. We were taken back to our rooms with free time for lunch and shopping.

At 3:00 p.m., we went to the MGH Performing Arts Centre to watch the Incredible Acrobats of China perform. They certainly were incredible! After this performance, we were taken to the Golden Coral restaurant for a Dinner Show. Both were excellent. We were entertained by Allen Edwards, who introduced us to his mother and, as it turned out, she is the owner of this place. The cost of this evening was included in our tour package.

Tonight was our only free evening in Branson, so we did our homework and went out for coffee.

Sunday, October 31, Halloween, and time to turn our clocks back one hour (a reminder from Fred). Today we had a leisurely morning since the bus wasn't leaving until 10:00 a.m.

Over at the coffee shop I met "Bessie" from the Ronnie Prophet show. She works there part time. I had an enjoyable conversation with her.

As we were boarding the bus this morning, we had a few good laughs. Some people were wearing masks and funny hats. Jo was a witch with green hair. She even had a broomstick for a few minutes.

Now we were on our way to the showboat, the Branson Belle, at White River Landing for a luncheon cruise. The boat was beautifully decorated for Christmas. Today was their first Christmas performance for this year. The entertainment was excellent.

We left there about 2:30 p.m. and headed for the IMAX Theatre. The show we watched was about Australia. After the show we browsed in the gift shop until six o'clock. At that time we all went into the restaurant for supper. Part of our group were seated at a round table. Halfway through their meal, that table began to rise. This was a Halloween prank at that restaurant!

After supper our bus driver, John, took us over to the Mickey Gillie Show. Everybody seemed to enjoy it. It was after 10:00 p.m. when we were going back to JR's. It was raining again, as it had most of the day. Edna and I went to Shoneys for a coffee, then we were ready for a good night's sleep.

Monday, November 1, we arose to the sound of pouring rain. With our heads covered, we went for our continental breakfast, which was good, as usual. The day was dull, but warm.

We departed at 10:00 a.m., going to the Welk Resort Theatre. We saw a nice collection of Lawrence Welk's memorabilia before going into the theatre where the Lowe family, four girls and one boy, would be entertaining. I thought the show was very enjoyable.

On the way back to our room, Fred announced that the bus would be going to the Factory Direct Outlet after lunch and we were welcome to go along. (Fred was looking for CD's for his brother.) Edna and I went on this excursion.

At 6:00 p.m., we were on our way to the Shoji Tabuchi Theatre. The gift shop was beautifully decorated for Christmas. It was also crowded with people; there was barely standing room. I have never seen such an elaborate ladies' rest room. There were bouquets of live orchids on the sink. A lady was standing by with a bottle of hand lotion after we washed our hands.

The show was spectacular. It was their first Christmas show for the season and just the greatest. We arrived back at our hotel at 10:00 p.m. and called it a day (a most enjoyable one).

Tuesday, November 2, some of our group had a nice surprise when they went for breakfast. Who should appear but Ronnie Prophet? He spent some time joking and visiting.

At 9:00 a.m., we departed for the Starlight Theatre and the Jim Owen show. He came on board the bus to greet us. His show was a tribute to Johnny Cash and some other stars. We thought his show was really great. After the show, we were bussed back to JR's. Edna and I went out exploring the shops across the street and found a pizza place for lunch.

In the afternoon, John drove us over to the Ray Stevens Show. Ray is a singer and comedian. He put on a good performance, but wasn't one of my favorites. While we were enjoying the show, John and Fred were having the bus checked for safety by U.S. safety officers. Fortunately, everything checked out 100%, but we all knew that's the only way John would drive.

After the show we were transported to Jim Owen's restaurant for supper. The food was good; they even had the fried bologna sandwiches that Jim spoke about on his show. When we

were all back on the bus, Jim came on again and thanked us all for coming. Now, that's our kind of guy!

Before going back to the motel, John took us on a tour through the Festival of Lights. Coming back, he sort of lost his way, so we joked about touring Branson streets in the dark. Actually, we had lots of fun and many laughs during the trip.

Wednesday, November 3, everybody was up early. This would be our last continental breakfast at JR's. We were all on the bus and ready to go before 8:00 a.m., except for two people. Rose Mack was at the hospital. Her daughter, Connie, was staying with her and they would fly home when Rosie was ready and able.

This morning, as the bus was leaving Branson, nearly everyone seemed to be having a nap. It was a dreary, rainy morning. We stopped at McDonalds in Carthage at 9:00 a.m. for a pit stop and snacks. It seems that some didn't have time for breakfast in their excitement to be heading home. With all the rain, even our bus, new as it was, decided to spring a few leaks. Now that everyone was awake, Jo gave us a word game to do; the winner had 23 out of 25 correct. We were heading out of the rain and the landscape was nice and green.

Lunch break was at Flying J's in Peculiar. Our afternoon pit stop was at the Platte rest area truck stop. We were treated to home-baked cookies, juice and water; a most enjoyable little picnic. This would be our last one for this trip and, likely, the year.

As soon as we got going, Doug and Pauline got out their guitar and song books. We had a great sing-a-long. I overheard someone say, "Just three more sleeps and we will be home."

We got to our hotel, the Days Inn at Council Bluff, about 5:30 p.m. Fred announced that the bus would be going to Harrah's Casino, shortly. We could have supper there at a ten percent discount. At 8:30 p.m., the bus would be going back to the motel. Anyone wanting to stay longer would be on their own. There was so much walking to get to any place in this casino that I didn't really like it. We enjoyed having a coffee maker in our room again.

Thursday, November 4, after our continental breakfast, we were on the bus by 8:00 a.m. Everyone seemed very cheerful this morning. Someone had an Allen Edwards tape and gave it to Jo to play for us. For awhile, it seemed like we were back in Branson.

Our first coffee stop today was a truck stop at Vermilion. We weren't hungry yet but it was nice to get off and walk a bit. It was fairly windy today. John said it was hard, driving. We saw

farmers out in their field threshing corn. There were huge piles of it. Now the sun was shining.

We had lunch at Perkins in Sioux Falls, then continued on for a stop at the Terry Redlin Art Gallery in Watertown. We were shown a film and were able to tour around, enjoying the art displays of original paintings. There was a gift shop with artwork for sale as well as freshly brewed coffee. We left there about 4:00 p.m. It was almost 6:00 p.m., when we arrived at the Sleep Inn at Fargo. Della, Cecile, Edna and I walked to the Iron Grill for a very nice supper. There was a cool wind blowing. From Fargo, North Dakota, you can look across and see Moorhead, Minnesota.

Friday, November 5, it was nearly 9:00 a.m. by the time we were leaving Fargo. The grass is still green in these parts. Today, deer season had opened, and we saw some hunters pulling jeeps to head out into the bush. We were going through windmill country. Also, there were still thousands of snow geese feeding in the fields. We stopped at Jamestown at 10:30 a.m. and went to McDonalds for our morning break. Back on the bus, we played Bingo for small prizes. I won a music tape.

We arrived in Bismark in time for lunch, which we had at the Cracker Barrel. This was one of our favorite eating places. The staff greeted us at the door when we arrived. When we were leaving, they gave each of us a candy stick.

On the road again the singing duo, Doug and Pauline, led us in a sing-a-long. There were many good singers on the bus, but we really enjoyed having the two lead singers perform. The grass was still green, but soon that would be left behind.

As we neared Minot, North Dakota, Fred passed out our custom declaration forms, reminding us not to cheat because we could end up in big trouble. We arrived in Minot about 4:30 p.m., so had some time to spare before supper. Edna and I walked over to the Thrift Store. She bought some pants. I found a vest for \$1.25. We went back to our room for awhile, then went to Perkins for our supper. I had clam chowder, half a sandwich and a piece of pumpkin pie. A little later, some of the ladies were playing cards and invited us to join them. I went, but Edna wanted to fill out her declaration card and watch TV. In the morning, our suitcases must be out by 7:00 a.m.

Saturday, November 6, we left Minot at 7:45 a.m. after a delicious continental breakfast - our last one. No more green grass, the scenery was very flat and dry, and the weather cool and hazy. Our 9:00 a.m. coffee break was at the duty-free store. We were able to shop for about half an hour, then on to customs at the border. A uniformed lady came aboard and did a thorough check.

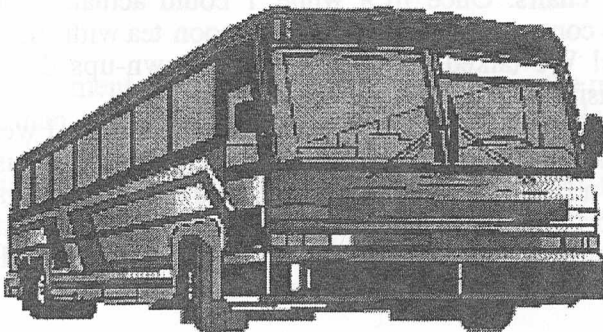
It took about half an hour. Everything went well and we were on our way again. Jo handed out a quiz to keep us occupied. We stopped in Regina at the Bonanza where we had a delicious smorg. From there, we were on our way to Saskatoon, where we had our break at a nice mall.

Back on the bus, we headed for North Battleford, our home for the night. Tonight we had to take care of our own suitcases. Everybody headed for the casino because of the handout, a ticket worth \$10.00 cash, a \$5.00 ticket towards supper and another \$5.00 ticket toward poker. I gave that one away. We didn't wait for the bus to take us back to our room, just walked across, stopping at Tim Horton's for a hot chocolate.

Sunday, November 7, we were up early and on the road by 8:00 a.m. During our trip, Jo had two diaries on the go. Every day, four people made entries in them, two people for one book and two for the other. Each day, new people were selected. This morning, for our entertainment, Jo got Darlene to read one of the diaries to us. It was very interesting.

It wasn't long before we were in Vermilion, Alberta, and had our break at the A&W there. Then, it was on to Wainwright where most of the passengers would be leaving us and going on the small bus back to their homes. Our bus journey would end at Wetaskiwin, right where we got on. There, Bob's brother, Lloyd, met us with Bob's van. We drove Lloyd home and headed for Edmonton. I spent an enjoyable evening with the Haley's. In the morning, Bob was going back to Wandering River to the farm, with Anne going to join him in a few days. I had a ride home, right to my doorstep. Bob decided that I had too much luggage, what with all the shopping, to be transferring everything to another vehicle.

So, the trip, which I was hesitant about, ended, but not without happy memories and new friends. □



FIRST PLACE: MEMOIR (NONFICTION)**A Tree I Have Known***by Henia J. Martyniuk**Warspite W.I.*

I look at the photo of the old homestead where I came to live as a child, and my eye is drawn, as it always is, to the poplar tree standing guard over the house. It is rooted right in front of the kitchen window, creating a canopy over the roof above and the grass below. I don't think Tree was planted there by anyone; he just chose to live near the house where the people were. The photograph was taken when Tree was in his prime, just like my dad when he became a farmer more than fifty years ago. Tree's trunk was smooth, straight and tall; his limbs reached over the house to protect us within, just like my dad's.

In summer, Tree provided cool relief from the hot sun and a safe place for the little birds to play hide-and-seek, from each other and the cat. By night, in the warm breeze, Tree scratched his branches against the side of the house as if to say all was well and he was just cooling down and stretching a bit. Sometimes, in the throes of a winter storm, he groaned out loud as though the wind was forcing him to work harder to protect the house and its occupants.

My dad threw a rope over a sturdy branch and notched a wooden board for a seat to create a swing for his little girl. It was low enough to the ground to make it impossible to swing high and, at first, I could not reach the ground but, as time went on, I grew to drag my feet on the grass until it made a soft groove in the dirt. Under Tree's leafy cathedral ceiling, I played house with my dolls and held tea parties on a little wooden box that was a table, with rocks for chairs. Once in a while, I could actually convince my mother to come out and have her afternoon tea with me, a tea party for ladies! We talked about things, as grown-ups did when they came to visit.

As I grew older, Tree became less important. I went away to build my life in other directions, to school, a career, to raise a family of my own. The farm yard changed; a new house and garage were added, old buildings disappeared, the rope swing rotted away, trees and shrubs filled empty spaces, but Tree held his ground, protected from the chainsaw by my dad's sentiment.

One day, as I watched my dad resting quietly under Tree watching three little boys noisily making roads for toy trucks and cars, I became conscious of the change in Tree; his bark was deeply grooved and split in places along his trunk; some branches were dry and brittle. Time was passing for Tree, my dad, and for me. I turned my head to avoid the reality before me. Then, through the mist that gathered suddenly in my eyes, I could see it all clearly.

There, not far away, was another poplar, just like old Tree, but with smooth pale green skin-like bark, its leafy canopy creating protective shade for the little birds that flitted about in safety. Beyond it, three more poplar saplings swayed, unsure of themselves in the wind, bobbing this way and that with the gusts.

My dad is gone, now, but Tree is still there. He looks tired and worn. Bees live in a big hole in his trunk. The largest limbs are bare in summer save a few leaves on the tips struggling to preserve what is left. He needs a trim to remove all the dead wood, but he is frail, too frail perhaps, to withstand a pruning. Beside Tree is his successor, herself getting gnarled and thick around the girth, with deeply-furrowed darkening bark, the sure sign of middle age. Beyond her, the once-saplings now stand tall and smooth, with branches outspread and growing still.

A little boy, now a man-child, has yet to gain the wisdom of years to comprehend my relationship with Tree. I am still strong enough to resist his threats and advances with the chainsaw, without explanation. However, there will come a day when I will no longer be Tree's protector, and he will be gone. For now, I take comfort from the branches of other trees in the yard, spreading and towering over me. here and there I note, in silent satisfaction, a new crop of saplings starting to sprout. ▣

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"The management of the home has more to do in the moulding of character than any other influence, owing to the large place it fills in the early life of the individual during the most plastic stage of development. We are therefore, justified in an effort to secure a place for home economics, or domestic science, in the educational institutions of this country."

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

Are You Lonesome Tonight?

by Diane Dammann

Alliance W.I.

Friday night, lonely again. I was two thousand miles away from my family. Husband was working out of town for another week. Little David was six months old and sleeping.

The phone rang. It was a wrong number.

The phone rang again. It was the same woman with the wrong number. We started to talk. She had a warm, interesting voice. She was from India and fairly new to town, too. We talked about foods, the weather and problems of locating in Ottawa. We agreed that it would be great to share a cup of tea. She invited me over to her place for tea since I was the one who had a car.

When David woke up, I packed his bottle and diaper bag and set out across town. I found the address, her directions were good.

A young man met me on the sidewalk and helped me carry the diaper bag in. I thought it was very nice that her son came out to meet us. She hadn't told me she had a son. He was a nice looking fellow, of slender build, very dark eyes and dark, well-groomed hair. He was about my age.

He pointed the way to a basement apartment. I entered, expecting to see his mother. As soon as we stepped into the suite, I realized that we were in a bachelor's apartment.

He was behind us, between us and the door we had just entered. I didn't want to insult him and tell him that I thought he had a woman's voice.

I think that I played it pretty cool. I sat in a chair with my son on my lap, cradled in one arm. We carried on with small talk while he prepared the tea. We sat and had a cup of tea while looking for more things to talk about. Now was not the time to renew the phone conversation on how lonely it was in Ottawa. The baby started to fuss so, like all mothers stuck in a sticky situation, I used the baby for an excuse to be on my way. I thanked him for his hospitality, shook hands, and made a retreat.

Once the car was safely around the corner, out of sight of the lonely young man from India, I started to laugh at my foolish predicament. I laughed all the way home. Laughter helped cure my loneliness. ■

Coping With Circumstances

by Kathryn Habberfield

Langdon W.I.

"The Dirty Thirties" - a decade of disillusion and despair - but also innovation!

The stock market failed, real estate lost most of its value, unemployment was at its peak -- the bottom line was that, for the average citizen, money was scarce as hen's teeth. These were the days before subsidized health care and before miracle medicines such as antibiotics. People had to rely on their own initiatives if they were going to survive.

As a child growing up in those times, I had no idea of how destitute people were. I lived on a ranch, so we always had enough food - nothing fancy - and I really did not care about my clothes. Hand-me-downs were worn by all my peers. Our mothers tried to alter clothes to make them fit, but only so much could be done. How do you make dresses from a 5'2" stoutish girl fit a 5'6" beanpole? To say we were not stylish is an understatement, but we were clothed.

Like all children, our family of four girls had all the usual afflictions - coughs, colds, head lice, bowel problems, to name a few. We could not afford to go to the doctor, so home remedies had to suffice. Parents at that time consulted their 'doctor books' and their neighbours. With the medication we took, it was "survival of the fittest". Youth does rebound and, in our family, we all came out alive.

When we had sore throats, we wore one of Dad's wool socks around our necks. The Raleigh and Watkins men visited country homes and sold a mustard ointment to rub on the throat before affixing the sock. The infection frequently traveled down to the lungs. We were put to bed with mustard or onion plasters on our chests; a damp square of cloth spread with mustard sauce or boiled onions. If the plaster was left on too long, the skin would become very red and often burn. Then we were rubbed with vaseline. Head lice passed through the school. The lice bit and laid eggs in our hair - the itch was unbearable. Coal oil (kerosene) killed lice, so that was our shampoo. It stung where the bites were and, of course, had to be repeated many times as the eggs hatched. This shampoo took all the shine and beauty out of our hair, but did the trick. Castor oil was used to loosen bowels, toast with scalded milk and salt and pepper helped diarrhea. It

seemed that the barn cats we played with gave us worms. A tablespoon of sugar soaked in turpentine cleared that up. I wonder that we did not suffer permanent harm to our digestive systems from the turpentine. While helping with chores in the bitterly cold winters, we got frostbite. Our noses, cheeks and ears were rubbed with snow to take out the frost. The chilblains in our feet were the worst. For that, we alternated soaking our feet in very hot and very cold water - ten seconds in each - until we had some relief.

Secondary school was a big problem. One room elementary schools dotted the prairie and children walked, rode horseback or used horse-drawn buggies to get there. After grade eight (later, grade nine) the only high schools were in the city. Compulsory school was to grade eight, or age fifteen. A large percentage of students had to complete their education at that level. Some were fortunate enough to have relatives in the city who kept them so they could get a profession. Because our parents had little money we were expected to work for room and board. It taught us responsibility and an appreciation of education.

While we were home, we were the hired help for our parents - haying, chopping wood, branding cattle, etc., we did it. Our pay was usually a cow or calf. I remember my sister selling a yearling calf for \$14.95. She thought she was a millionaire. Of course, that money had to be spent on necessities. Prices for livestock and cereal grains were at an all time low.

Unemployment was rampant. Trans-Canada trains were packed, in the boxcars and on the roofs, with unemployed men in search for elusive jobs. Many jumped off in the small towns and, in exchange for favors such as chopping wood, were given sandwiches and coffee by the homeowners.

The weather fit in with the trying times. Extreme cold and blizzards treated us in the winter and hot, dry days with continual wind caused much havoc in the summer. Excessive soil drifting with high winds ruined crops and grass. Sometimes there was so much dust in the air that visibility was almost zero - day was turned into night. This was probably the most remembered decade of our hundred years in Alberta. Nobody who lived through it forgets the survival tactics.

The strange thing about this era was how happy we were as a family. We had neighbours with whom we played cards, had picnics, dinners, etc. At home, in the evening by the coal oil lamp, we played games, read books, and knew that tomorrow would be better.

And it finally was. □

FIRST PLACE: POETRY**Search For Strength***by Henia J. Martyniuk**Warspite W.I.*

This is not the life I ordered;
 Instead life orders me.
 I thought that if I lived it right,
 I'd reap accordingly.

But I neglected one small fact,
 One I should have known.
 That in this complex, restless world
 I am not alone.

So much depends upon the Force
 I scoffed at foolishly.
 Nor did I see that man, and mind,
 Would bear down on me.

Oh! I have learned, Dear Soul of Mine,
 With deep humility,
 I am but a grain of sand
 Tossed on a heaving sea,

I must take what I am giv'n,
 The gifts, the angst, the hurt.
 This is not the life I ordered;
 But I will make it work.



SECOND PLACE: POETRY**Faith**

*by Mary Maggs
Princess Anne W.I.*

I stand at the door looking out at the lake.
The family's asleep, but I am awake.
Crossing the threshold I step out in the night.
It's as clear as day, the moon is so bright.
The midwinter night is so crisp and clear,
And an icy coldness fills the air.

The trees by frost have all been kissed,
They shimmer in the moonlight mist.
A million stars are twinkling high,
Like heavenly candles in the sky.
An owl out hunting flies silently by
And off in the distance the coyotes cry.

Upwards I gaze, admiring the view
And wonder, as maybe others do too,
Is there a God somewhere out there?
Are there Angels? Does anyone care?
I stand quite awhile out there in the night
Looking in awe at the beautiful sight.

There must be a God, who created all this.
I know it couldn't be just hit and miss.
I shiver on hearing a night bird's song
And I know that I have been out here too long.
For the moon has slipped behind a cloud
Leaving the world in its winter's shroud.

Then stepping inside I silently pray,
If you can hear me, O Lord far away,
I ask for the touch of your heavenly hand
To guide and protect this wonderful land,
To open our eyes to the beauty out there
And to give us a world without any fear.



THIRD PLACE: POETRY**Polar Bears***by Edna Wittleton**Grimshaw W.I.*

From Winnipeg to Churchill, too,
With Calm Airlines is how we flew.
We were picked up in a little bus,
Taken to our center without a fuss.

In the Tundra Buggy, away we went,
Took our lunch, all day we spent.
We looked and looked for animals there
And finally we saw a Polar Bear.

The Polar Bears are such magnificent creatures,
Their dark, bright eyes are one of their features.
They have huge paws and claws to help them survive
And thick, creamy fur to stay warm and alive.

They plod along as slow as can be
As they really watch us carefully.
They stand up tall, as high as a wheel
On a Tundra Buggy. It doesn't seem real!

With their little black nose they sniff away
In case some food has gone astray.
They live off their fat in the summertime
And wait to eat seals in the wintertime.

Along the tundra they do stroll
And often stop in the snow to roll.
They are tired and often stop to rest.
They like a thicket of grass the best.

They often wander to the garbage dump
And sometimes get a needle in their rump.
They have to be taken away by man
Then taken north to the bush as fast as they can.

We often saw lovely fox and ptarmigan
And snowy white owls, now and again.
But we always kept looking and watching for bears,
As they have gathered like this for many years.

I often wondered throughout the day,
As I looked at the green waters of the bay.
Could the Polar Bears smell the cool, cool breeze
And know when the Hudson Bay would freeze? ■

Finding Your History: Genealogy, the Exciting Hobby

*by Isabelle Nash
Colchester W.I.*

Genealogy is one of the most rewarding and exciting hobbies that I have ever taken up. In this year of Alberta's Centenary it is appropriate that we think about our ancestors. What were their names, where did they live and what made up their lives? In most families, there are stories handed down from generation to generation from where you can start your investigations. Today, with the advent of the Internet and computerized research, what used to take years now only takes weeks. Finding new living relatives can be invigorating. On long, cold winter nights genealogy is the perfect hobby.

I cannot say that I was always interested in my history. It was not until my husband experienced such amazing success, in such a short period of time, that my interest was piqued. There are mysteries in families. Events separate loved ones, family members become estranged for one reason or another, and there are premature deaths. So was the case with my father-in-law. His mother died of tuberculosis when he was only six. He had little recollection of her as she spent most of his early years in a sanatorium. He had no knowledge of any of her relatives only some old papers and documents. When writing his own story he was wondering about his mother, her family and whether it might be possible to find out something about them. My husband took up the challenge. Armed with what little information his father had given him, he started researching on the Internet. Within a few short weeks he had found a website that took a branch of his grandmother's family tree back to the early 1600's! The administrator of the website was most helpful, when contacted, to add my father-in-law's information to the tree. After emailing back and forth it became evident to him that we had no knowledge of the other living members of the family. My husband was introduced by email to a second cousin. We learned that her mother, a first cousin of my father-in-law's mother, a 90-year-old lady in Illinois was alive and well! Following the introduction to this family there was a flurry of emails, exchange of information, photographs and, most of all, a lot of excitement. We are now in regular contact by letter and telephone. Although we have not met,

it is a future goal. Our second cousin has supplied much of the information for the family website and has helped further our research in Illinois.

Such successes in the hobby of genealogy are not uncommon. In fact, they are one of the things that keep people motivated and interested to continue. You may wonder where to start with your own family. The best place to start is with the older members of your family. An enormous amount of information is available only for the asking. Interview the senior members of your family and map out a preliminary sketch of what your family tree looks like. Find out particularly where people were born and where they grew up. Dates or approximate dates will help you as you flesh out the information with further research. Ask family to write down their stories or get them to dictate them to be typed out and edited later. Some families have documents such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, or legal documents that all contain invaluable information for the researcher. Gather this information together and start keeping it in a binder or filing cabinet in some sort of order. You will, over time, collect so much information that it is important, right from the start, to keep everything organized.

The next step is to put the information that you have into a genealogy software program. There are several programs available. There are important aspects that the software must include. These are the ability to record the sources of your information and the ability to generate a GEDCOM or text file only, which contains your information in a format that any other genealogy program can use. Any program must have these two components to be useful. Ask other family members, who may be conducting genealogy research, what program they are using and it may be prudent to use the same program. I am using *Family Tree Maker* on the advice of a family member who has documented hundreds of names in a large Ukrainian family tree belonging to my mother-in-law. *Family Tree Maker* has the ability to generate family trees in many formats, some of which our cousin has shared in large wall displays at family reunions. These are always eye catching and a huge interest is shown in seeing where each person fits in the whole scheme.

After choosing your software, start by entering your own name, birth date, marriage date, place of birth; then progress to children, parents and grandparents. The fun is beginning.

A subscription to a genealogy website is useful at this point and well worth the money expended. Subscriptions can

sometimes be used for trial periods to see if you like the program or if it has the type of information that you need. I am using a subscription to *Ancestry.com*. This is a comprehensive website that fits with the *Family Tree Maker* software. It presents to you all possible matching persons from their extensive records collection, for each name that you have in your family tree. Names are listed by star value, the higher star value, the more likely this person is the one in your tree. It allows you to compare, match and merge each person for birth year, place of birth, place of residence and family members. What used to take years of painstaking research is now available at your fingertips.

My family is from Great Britain and I am able to access census records for 1901, 1891, 1881 and 1871 online, The one hundred year rule applies to release of census information so that it will be 2012 before the 1911 census data will be released. The censuses for 1861, 1851 and 1841 are not yet available online but will be in the next few years, perhaps even this year. All these census records have enabled me to track my family back for seven generations. Census information is considered to be second hand information due to the potential for error. Corroborating census information with a second source is useful. It is possible to look at the original census documents online. The handwriting from an earlier era can be challenging to read but there is also a typed format to assist you. In the censuses are names, sex, marital status, age, occupation and place of birth. Previous generations were not so particular about spelling of names so there are frequently differing spellings of both first names and last names. This can be confusing but the program will pick up on names with a similar sound.

I am also able to find birth, death and marriage certificates from July 1, 1837 onwards, which is when compulsory registration in the British National Register came into force. Birth certificates confirm the date and place of birth, parentage and also include the occupation of the father and maiden name of the mother. Marriage certificates give the full names and ages of the parties, their fathers' names and their addresses prior to the marriage. Death certificates confirm the date and place of death, cause of death, previous occupation, address, and the person registering the death, who is frequently a family member. It is possible to send away for a copy of the registration for a small fee, the address for which is available with the citation on the website.

Small successes are very motivating and soon your whole family will be interested in your findings. Any assistance that they

can give you will be welcome, as the further back you go the more names and people go onto your tree. What started as a small hobby is now a large hobby.

When looking for living relatives, recruiting family members living in the country or place of origin can be most useful. My first cousin in England provided me with eight names from the Nottingham telephone book with the surname I was seeking. Writing to these eight people enabled me to find a fellow genealogist who had information to share on my family tree, and a second cousin once removed who provided information on a whole branch of my tree with which I was unfamiliar. He was quite surprised to find cousins of whom he had no knowledge. I am now regularly corresponding with these two people and believe I have found a link between all of us.

Genealogists are very friendly and helpful people but it is prudent to be aware of some of the pitfalls and the code of ethics necessary when researching genealogy. Never share information on living relatives without their consent. It is possible to omit living relatives on family trees that are being shared. When uploading family trees to websites such as *One Family Tree*, make sure that they have a strict code of ethics. This code of ethics should state that they never divulge information on living people. In this age of identity theft it is more important than ever to be very careful with the information of living people.

There are a number of interesting world wide projects in which anyone can become involved. One is the photographing of headstones. Headstones contain important about deceased relatives. My second cousin in Nottingham has already offered to go to the local cemetery where he is sure there are more of our relatives buried. My husband's cousin, just this week, sent a photograph to us of the headstone of my husband's great-grandfather's grave in Vandalia, Illinois.

Photographs and genealogy go well together. developing a pictorial history by entering old photographs and genealogy into a scrapbook will make a meaningful resource for future generations. Scrap booking is currently a popular hobby with stores dedicated to providing acid free papers and embellishments to make pages beautiful, informative and well-preserved. Journaling of stories can add interest to old black and white photographs, baptismal certificates, copies of birth certificates and maps. I have photos from the 1890's; one is a metal photograph of my grandmother and her siblings. The oldest original document in my possession is the marriage certificate of my great

grandparents from Thursday, December 26, 1889 at 10:30 am, in the Nottingham Register Office. This marriage caused a rift in the family, possibly due to it being conducted outside the church, or did they just run away together without their parents' permission, or was he Roman Catholic and she Protestant? This is one of the, as yet, unsolved mysteries in my family. I am sure there are similar mysteries in your family!

There is a plethora of interesting and informative genealogy websites to visit when you are researching. *RootsWeb* is a site where you can subscribe to newsletters and post messages on message boards. There are links to worldwide resources and there are lists of Canadian sites. Many Alberta historical and family history societies have websites including those in Burtonsville, Cold Lake, Fort MacMurray, Grande Prairie, Mayerthorpe, Peace River and the *Alberta Family Histories Society*. *Our Roots* contains local Canadian histories from across Canada. *The Canadian Genealogy Centre* develops databases on many aspects of the Canadian population. It contains information on censuses, immigration, home children and soldiers. *Cyndi Howell's List* has the most comprehensive list of resources available for any genealogical research including Canadian resources. I am seeking my great grandfather who, family legend purports, was killed in the Boer War of 1899 to 1902. From this site I now have several leads to follow. I hope to find out where and when he died, where he is buried and in which regiment he was serving. Some family members will require more time and effort than others. My great grandfather is proving to be of those members.

If you feel that you would benefit from some education in genealogy, there are local courses and there are also online courses. *The National Genealogical Society of the U.S.A.* hosts online courses. You do not have to be a member to participate in these courses, but there is a fee.

Whether you are young or old, new to genealogy or rekindling an old hobby, there is so much to discover in the Internet world of genealogy. You will be amazed at how quickly your family tree grows and how much encouragement you receive from your family. You may find that a distant cousin has already researched your family tree and you just have to find it. You will make new friends and, most fun of all, you are certain to discover new relatives. I encourage you in this, Alberta's centenary, to look into your family's history.

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5. Our Roots - ourroots.ca Canadian local histories online
6. The Canadian Genealogy Centre - genealogy.gc.ca Databases on the Canadian population
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SECOND PLACE: ESSAY**And the Winner is....Father!***by Henia J. Martyniuk**Warspite, W.I.*

There are men, and there are fathers! They are not the same.

Men are the hunks on television, who frolic shamelessly in the arms of seductresses selling perfume and sleek cars. Men in sexy Texas Longrider coats ride off into fabulous foothills' sunsets on thoroughbreds, or splash through potholes in shiny new Broncos and never get stuck. Men wrestle alligators, and win! A camel would never spit in a man's face. Men work out in designer gyms with designer trainers, designer clothes revealing designer buns. Men have cell phones attached to their ears. Men are never fathers; they are indulgent uncles, at best.

Fathers, on the other hand, are the regular guys.

Fathers are not sexy. Fathers don't even know what the word means, except to warn their daughters about men who do. Fathers share mothers' beds because there is no room for everyone but, as soon as the kids leave home, Father will get his own. Kids know that Mother got the baby from the hospital. Father merely drove the car. He does, once in a long while, risk blindness to report that Mrs. So and So's dress was cut far too low, how shameful! He had to look several times to be sure. He clucks for days at the mere thought.

Men don tuxes to eat garlic at fancy restaurants because it's trendy. Father eats garlic because he likes it. So what if Mother must wash the curtains in the bedroom the day after? Father's preferred gourmet food is sardines out of the can, pickled eggs and fish, killer horseradish and pork hocks.

Men rarely shave; they just splash Alfred Sung or Obsession on smooth hairless faces for effect. If Father wants a good shave, he uses a straight razor, patches the nicks with tissue and dances madly around the house from the sting of Old Spice that the kids gave him for Christmas. In his faded boxers, yet! A man would consult with his haberdasher to decide the colour.

Fathers fix stuff! Barbie broke her arm? Doctor Dad replaces it promptly with a limb from Baby-Go-Potty. Sonny spends hours shining HIS car with spit and polish while Father

changes spark plugs, oil, batteries, and that's after he pays for the tires, insurance, gas, and the car.

Men with funny hair and oversize shorts play basketball for money. Father hides his basketball under his belt and blames Mother for shrinking his pants.

Men pay huge sums for rock concert tickets. Father invites his entire family to a rock festival in the back forty, with the promise of rolling stones as the feature.

Father uses his kids. He says to mother at breakfast, "The kids want a snowmachine. Think I'll go see the dealer." At lunch he reports, "What a deal! I said snowmobile and he threw in a motor bike, a chain saw, and for you...a lawn mower." Men, on the other hand, walk into a shop with a list and a blank cheque, and outrun avalanches in the mountains!

Fathers have selective vision, hearing and memory, unlike men, who use laptops and telephone gadgets to organize their lives. Frustrated Mother says, "Tell those kids to stop doing THAT!" Father, as he lifts his eye from the hockey game, queries, "Which kids?"

Men make decisions firmly, on paper, in triplicate, legally binding. Father passes major decisions to his consultant with the simple statement, "Go ask your mother."

Fathers are the subjects of family legend, that grow like a five o'clock shadow as time goes on, because fathers have character and they make things happen. As soon as he hears the words, "Remember when father...", he knows he is a victim who must endure, with a benign smile, the story of the time when he was rescuing the dog, the locked door slammed shut leaving him out in a lightening storm dressed only in his underwear and a ski jacket, and the police drove by. The next generation will remember this as the time grandpa, wearing his longjohns, threw grandma out of the house and was arrested. Kids can be ruthless. A man would, at the very least, have slipped on his matching designer jeans.

Anybody can be a plasticky television hunk, but Fathers are the real stars, everyone a winner in the ACADEMY of HIS FAMILY.

A very HAPPY FATHER'S DAY to every guy who has changed a diaper he paid for. ■

THIRD PLACE: ESSAY

Show - Offs?

by Elizabeth Lesfrud

Ass. member, Viking W.I.

When our Constituency Convener came to visit our Women's Institute in the Fall of nineteen forty-nine, she spoke about our branch entering some crafts for the handicraft competition. A few questions were asked and explained and the membership sort of agreed to think and talk about that. The idea simmered through the winter and I know that several members, being craft-minded, were working, trying it all out. By spring, our members had decided to enter the constituency craft competition.

I'm not a crafter, so my contribution would be in the baking section which was part of the competition. An orange chiffon cake was what I chose from the list.

The excitement generated by our decision and then the preparation prior to the conference - why you'd think this was a world shaking operation. Yet, all the while, we kept saying, "It's really no big deal!"

Irene, who regularly sewed for her girls, spent three times the usual time on a shirt, fussing and groaning at the mistakes which reared their ugly heads to her over critical eyes. Agnes, who did the most exact hardanger, found an intricate design and worked painstakingly - then decided to enter an article she had finished previously. Christine, who made the best brown bread around, baked and baked, measuring and timing everything for that final try whereas before - as she said herself - she had just poured and sifted, never using a measure or looking at the clock. I, myself, baked chiffon cakes till I was sure my family would gag on them. Each one seemed less perfect than the one before.

Then, when the day arrived and we were on our way to the conference, there was much clucking and fussing, explaining and apologizing. What had we got ourselves into?

But, when our members arrived at the conference hall and went to place our exhibits, we saw other women, also flushed, taut and fearful, wondering what had given them the idea that they should expose themselves so to the world.

Looking at the other cakes, I saw that, although they were mostly tall, handsomely proportioned and of a healthy colour,

they weren't any better than mine. I went to look at the other items, some knitted things and a few quilts, then nonchalantly came back and glanced at the cakes indifferently to see what a judge would see at first glance. Then I felt foolish. Of course the look of a cake was just a small part of the judging; the texture, moisture and uniformity of the grain were considered of prime importance. And the taste, of course. I hadn't tasted it. Why hadn't I? Somewhere underneath where it wouldn't show. I was angry with myself. But others were looking at the cakes and talking about them. I moved on, lest they guess I was churning inside.

The conference started in another room while the Home Economists, acting as judges, were busy with the baking, sewing and crafts. My mind was only half at the meeting though it was interesting. Lunchtime came and we wanted to view the competitions but were told that the judging had not been completed. Others seemed not to care; we'd have more time to visit and relax over our meal. We'd start the business earlier so that we could take time, later on, to view the exhibits.

I could feel the air stand still in the room. Time was holding back. The women were making all sorts of superfluous sounds, laughing, talking and eating, just to push the time faster, or so it seemed. Later, I concentrated on the guest speaker, listened to the questions and even got into the discussions.

At long last, the exhibits were ready to be viewed. Everyone was in a hurry to get to the room. I wasn't going to jump and push! I talked to a woman next to me who soon was ahead of me, so I remarked about the rush to the lady behind me who had a funny flush and steel in her eye and, before I knew it she was ahead of me, too. Anyway, I finally got into that room. Slowly, I worked down the aisles looking at articles -- oh-h-h -- one of our women got a red ribbon for her hardanger, another received a blue for her skirt -- there was a red for the whole wheat bread -- how marvelous. And then it jumped at me - down the table - a red ribbon next to my cake! Can't be!

Women were crowding around, talking and laughing. I couldn't go there now. I went over to the other side of the room to look at rugs and cushions and to get some air. I had never won anything before. How does one act?

After awhile some of our members got together and we laughed and congratulated each other, hugged and giggled. We got second placing in overall points -- that was fantastic. In later years we received first prize overall and the shield several times

but, this time, our first, was by far the most memorable.

Going home, all the women talked a mile a minute, laughed and giggled on a high, all the way and for quite a bit after that.

I was surprised what a boost to my morale winning a prize for one of my cakes turned out to be. I was trying to say to myself that it was, really, no big deal - much less than many of the other things I had done. So why the high? For days it was the buzz of the district, each woman involved gaining in stature in the eyes of the community. What a lot of regaling, adding on, joking and boosting! (No press coverage, however.)

At one Sunday dinner at a neighbour's house, the hostess asked my husband if he'd like a piece of cake and he replied, "Oh - I don't know now - I only eat red ribbon cakes," at which everyone laughed.

My family began to taste, evaluate and discuss the food I prepared and I, in turn, tried hard to stand up to their scrutiny. They were enjoying the privilege of eating *first prize food*, which was really the same food as the food they had taken for granted for so long.

Even more dramatically, there was a change in one of our older members. As a young girl she had received a face injury and was a quiet, retiring person, never wishing to get too involved in anything. When our Branch was trying to fill our quota of articles for the competition, we coaxed her to bake some of her delicious tea biscuits which she made with cream. At first she wouldn't hear of it but, finally, not wishing to let us down, she promised to try. It must have been a most difficult decision for her.

After she won first prize, I began to notice a change in her. She began to volunteer to help with odd jobs at our meetings, with roll calls and program ideas and then even gave a paper. When our family visited at her home, we were surprised at how she had gained in poise and had become a confident and gracious hostess.

Why was receiving acclaim from outside sources such a big deal? I wondered and wondered. I had a fairly good family, often receiving appreciation and recognition from them, as well as from friends and peers. I realized how much satisfaction and happiness I got from it. The appreciation always lifted me. I thrived on it. But what was this special ingredient from outside sources?

And I began to think about those who were never appreciated, who were always put down by those around them, always made to feel worthless, their best efforts not noted; some even abused, physically and mentally.

What would happen? How did they exist? Would they, maybe, pretend they didn't care? Shut off all expectations? All hurts? Slowly but surely close up, shrivel. die inside?

I wanted to help - to care and encourage people - to praise and lift up. How could I - how could our Institute - be more appreciative, more a booster? I mulled and mulled over that question - day and night.

And, then, maybe too, could we be more imaginative; try more new things - something special - something bigger? What are some of the needs of our members? - our neighbourhood? - our district? □



FIRST PLACE: ADULT FICTION**A Father's Day Shirt Tale***by Henia Martyniuk**Warspite W.I.*

Last year Father's Day, my neighbour, Belma, borrowed twenty bucks from her husband, Bronco, to buy him a Father's Day present. She had her mind on a shirt from the Canadiana shop in town. This shirt is Bronco, really, she thought.

On Father's Day morning, Bronco flipped back the tissue in the box.

Silence.

"Well?" said Belma.

Louder silence. Eventually he recovered. "Who, in tarnation, would wear THAT?" He poked his finger at the heap of fabric as though it might bite.

"You!" said Belma, flatly.

Bronco stared at the shirt, and the shirt stared back. Literally. Animals, huge brown beaver and big black moose to be exact, with glossy beady eyes, chased each other up the sleeves, down the front and across the back. Loonie-sized mosquitos zipped under, over and among their feet. All on a sea of red. Canada flag red.

She noticed the flinch in Bronco's face.

"Take it back! Get yourself what you want!" The ice in her voice gave notice that further conversation was over, for a week, at least.

Bronco took the shirt back, but it was almost Canada Day before he got up enough nerve to show her what he bought.

"Get ready!" he announced enthusiastically. "I'm wearing THE shirt!"

In the kitchen door, before the whole family, stood a map...of Canada. And somewhere in it stood Bronco.

Belma shot a mouthful of coffee into her armpit, and the kids fell to laughing on the floor.

"Look." He began a cross-Canada finger-walk on his chest. "It starts with British Columbia, right up to Alaska." He stretched Alberta out on his sleeve, turned to reveal Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario spread out below, with Yukon and Nunivut across the back, Quebec on the other sleeve, right around to the Maritimes and Newfoundland under his chin.

"See, it's the only time the Pacific meets the Atlantic," he gloated, pointing out the buttons down the front. He tugged the 49th parallel at his waist; the shirt dropped all the way down to Mexico, California and Florida.

The kids attacked him immediately, first with prodding fingers poking out Fredericton, Winnipeg, Victoria, Smoky Lake, Whitehorse and Prince Alberta. They ran their fingers up and down the rivers and tickled him in the Rockies. Then they took to running Dinky cars on grand tours right around the country, and into the U.S.

When Bronco realized the pleasure of this massage, he ordered them to take holidays starting at Lethbridge, to Montreal via the Arctic Circle and to go slowly because there is ice. They soothed one patch of itchy skin near North Battleford and another in Nova Scotia.

The next day, the kids badgered him to wear the shirt so they could travel back and forth across Canada on vacations and business trips. He encouraged them heartily, offering suggestions dependent on what part needed the massage. "Drive along the North Saskatchewan for a bit. It empties into Hudson Bay, you know." He stretched the wrinkles out of the shirt to make the road passable. "Or, you could go through Idaho to North Dakota," he whispered in sheer relief. His back ached from the afternoon's golf game.

By the end of the week their marks in geography had skyrocketed.

But, he was annoyed when he laid himself out on the couch that evening expecting his usual massage, and they disappeared into the kitchen.

"Hey, you guys, aren't you going on holidays tonight?" he called.

"We went and we're home already. We flew Air Canada," they shouted back. "And we're flying from now on."

Belma burned the shirt after Canada Day, after Bronco, or rather, the shirt, caused a near-riot at the community block party. She didn't mind comments and jokes, but when some floozy walked her fingers up the MacKenzie, with every intention of crossing the border, Belma brought up the subject of Jean Chretien and Paul Martin. Mixed with beer, she knew this was heavy stuff.

The party ended when Bronco sided with Joe Clarke. "Kick him out," yelled the crowd.

Kick me out, or kick me in,' he grinned. "Just don't kick me in Montana." ■

SECOND PLACE: ADULT FICTION**Rena's Log Cabin Home***by Marion Brooks**Glendale W.I.*

Memories filtered through Rena's mind as she tied her small motorboat to the familiar old dock situated in the rock-strewn bay of the mighty Severn River. Ten years of city life had changed her from a rednecked sprite into a slim young woman with an expectant look in her sparkling green eyes. A sprinkle of freckles scattered across her upturned nose and dimpled cheeks combined with auburn pony-tailed hair, belied the twenty two years she had to her credit.

Pushing aside bright green ferns, she fought her way along the overgrown path to her childhood home in the Canadian forest. Unapproachable by car, the secluded two-room cabin remained a wilderness retreat. Rena entered the clearing, halted, then slowly approached the tiny structure. Her keyed up senses, refusing to accept the picture before her of neglect and decay, constructed, instead, a pleasant scene of long ago. The pungent odour of cedar filled her nostrils as she crossed the rough brown-black bark of a log, one of many making up the walls of the little cabin. Between the logs, cracking clay gave a weather-beaten look to the humble dwelling.

Tarpaper protected the peaked roof like a huge Hudson Bay blanket. Wifts of curling grey smoke spouted from the clay chimney, emitting a mouth-watering aroma of roast beef and hot rolls.

Bright red ivy geraniums spilled over rough pine window boxes, exuberantly trying to escape captivity to live in the dark, rich earth of the colourful petunia gardens beneath each window. Side-hinged windows, two in front and two in back, each had similar flower displays that added a welcoming touch to the bleakness of the logs, tarpaper and clay.

Snowshoes hung in pairs on rusty spikes on either side of the door. Their curved wood and waxed gut lace made intricate designs against the dark timbers. Sunlight filtering through three nearby birch trees cast foreboding shadows on a dozen steel beaver traps hanging on the east wall. The ever-encroaching forest was as close as thirty feet from the back and sides of the building. A lifeline to civilization, the winding river could be viewed from

the sparsely-treed front yard. A sawhorse stood sentinel in the front yard, surrounded by sawdust, wood chips, a woodsman's axe imbedded in an old pine stump, scattered maple leaves, pine cones and brown pine needles. Rena inhaled deeply, enjoying the rich pungent fragrance from freshly cut maple and birch, neatly piled for winter. A looped-rope swing with a notched board seat swung lazily on the sagging limb of a giant oak in the side yard. Shaded by spreading oak limbs, a pile of golden sand was mottled with an army of toy trucks, pails and curling brown oak leaves.

Approaching the door after a complete circling of the cabin, Rena reached out and lifted the latch. Reality came back with a heart-rending tug as the old door crashed to the floor. Dust particles swirled about her head and the musty odour of dampness permeated the hot, dry air. Rena sadly turned away and slowly made her way back down the path leading to the endless river below. ■

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Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

In 1897 she formed the first Women's Institute in Stoney Creek, Ontario, to educate women. Her suggestion of 'For Home & Country' as the motto was adopted and remains today.

She succeeded in having Domestic Science courses introduced in 32 centres, operating under school boards and other government organizations and private schools.

She persuaded the Ontario Government to initiate domestic science courses at the Ontario Normal School. Due to her influence Sir Wm. Macdonald agreed to provide funds for the establishment of Macdonald Institute at Guelph, and Macdonald College at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, for teaching Agriculture and Domestic Science.

As a result of her final speech in 1910 to a meeting of the Federation of Women's Clubs in Massey Hall, the Lillian Massey School of Domestic Science was founded in Toronto, later to become the Household Science Department of the University of Toronto.

She organized the Y.W.C.A. into a national organization and was the first vice president.

She assisted in organizing the Victorian Order of Nurses and the National Council of Women.

In her capacity as a lecturer she was one of the first women, if not the first, to be employed by the Ontario Government.

SECOND PLACE: CHILDREN'S FICTION

A Day For Tears

by Marion Brooks

Glendale W.I.

"Lordy, Mom, please send this kid outside. I don't think I'll ever finish this with her bugging me." Sharon threw up her hands in despair. "She's a non-stop chatterbox."

Mrs. Adams stopped sewing. "Put that back, Meggie. Come here." She drew five-year-old Meg away from the box of trinkets Sharon was sorting. "Sharon is busy."

"But Mommie," Meg said as big tears rolled down her cheeks, "Sharon is going away. I want her to stay here."

"Now dear," her mother soothed, "she's only going to Aunt Mary's in Cedarville. Sharon will be home often."

"You'd think I was going forever," stated Sharon flatly. "It's time she stopped acting like my shadow. I feel I can't breathe."

Meggie wailed, "Please, Sharon, don't stop breathing. You will die! Mommy, make Sharon keep breathing. Don't let her die. I'll go away. I promise."

"Just go outside and play, Meg. I'm okay." Sharon spoke quietly, now. "Mom, she's such a baby. I hope school helps. She needs to be with kids her own age."

Mother resumed sewing without answering. Meggie retreated to her sandbox where Ruff, the collie, was enjoying a nap.

"Mommy is always busy. Sharon is going away. Nobody likes me. I'm just in their way. I'm going to school soon, too, but Mommy is making Sharon's dresses. She says, 'I'll make your clothes later, Meg.' When is later, Ruff? I'm glad I have you, Ruff. I know you love me. Come Ruff," Meg called, leaving the sandbox. "Let's go find Daddy." She headed towards the path leading into the woods. Ruff wagged his tail happily and ran on ahead.

Meg's little legs carried her steadily into the forest. She knew Daddy went this way to work. The path was well worn and easy to follow. Towering maples and pines cast awesome shadows as the sun peeked through the expanse of leaves and massive branches.

Ruff stopped suddenly. A big, brown jackrabbit scampered across the path. Ruff lunged after the fleeing bunny, barking loudly.

"Ruff, come back! Come back!" Meggie shouted. She stared into the shadows where the animals had disappeared.

Meggie was alone.

"Ruff, come back!" she called shakily, choking on her sobs. She looked up and down the path; wanting to go back home but no longer knowing which way to go. Very frightened, now, Meggie leaned against a big maple tree, then slowly sank to the ground. Sobs wracked her tiny body and she lay with her face on her arms. A wet nose nuzzled her arm. She looked up to see her beloved dog beside her.

"Oh, Ruff, we're lost! Stay with me, please."

Ruff snuggled close, as if to comfort her. Worn out from her walk and emotional turmoil, Meggie fell asleep.

Meggie awoke to feel strong arms lifting her.

"Daddy, you found me. I was so scared."

"Hush, Meggie," daddy said quietly. "I'll soon have you home. Come, Ruff; good boy; you took care of my little girl." Father strode quickly along the path.

Soon Mother's frantic voice could be heard calling, "Meggie! Meggie! Can you hear me?"

Ruff barked sharply. Daddy shouted, "Here, Jane. I have Meg. She's fine."

"Thank God you found her, John," said Mother, shakily, as she met them. "Meg has never left the yard alone, before. I was so worried."

Meg realized her Mother was very upset. She lay quietly in daddy's arms until they were inside the house. Wide-eyed, she watched Sharon's pale, worried face as she reached out and took her from daddy's arms.

"Meg," Sharon asked, "Where were you?"

Meg's answer came in a rush of words. "I went to find Daddy 'cause you and Mommy don't want me here. I don't want you to go away. I don't want you to die. If you don't breathe, you will die." Tears came freely, once again.

"Meg, honey," Sharon said, "I didn't really mean I couldn't breathe. I just meant I sometimes need to have time to myself. I have so much to do right now. I do love you, you little goose. High school is too far away to come home every night, but I'll see you most weekends and holidays. You'll see. We'll have lots of time together. You can show me your new school books

and tell me about your new friends you'll meet at your school."

This delighted Meg.

"Now, young lady," Mother's voice startled her. "It's supper, a bath, then off to bed for you. Tomorrow we are having a picnic with our neighbours. The next day, I will sew your new dresses."

"You can help me decide which new dress I should wear for first day at school," added Sharon.

Meg wriggled free of Sharon's arms. "Mommy, you do love me, don't you?" she asked.

"Of course I do, dear. Don't ever frighten us like that again," Mother answered.

"No, Mommy. I won't." Meg replied meekly. "I hope you are not too lonesome when Sharon and I go to school." ▢



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